



City of Pflugerville

Minutes - Final

Equity Commission

Monday, July 11, 2022

6:30 PM

100 E Main Street Suite 500, Pflugerville, TX

Regular Meeting

Equity Commission Members:

Pat Epstein-Chair

James Matlock -Vice-Chair

Victor To- Secretary

Daisy Delgado Castillo

Virginia Rogers

Ana Pomar

Claudia Yanez

1. Call to Order

Chair Epstein called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Present: James Matlock – Vice Chair

Pat Epstein - Chair

Daisy Delgado Castillo

Victor To – Secretary

Ana Pomar

Claudia Yanez

Staff: Chief Jason O'Malley, Library Director Jennifer Griswold

Others: Councilmember Jim McDonald

2. Citizens Communication

None

In accordance with the Texas Attorney General's Opinion, any public comment that is made on an item that is not on the published final agenda will only be heard by the Equity Commission. No formal action, discussion, deliberation, or comment will be made.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3A. [2022-0684](#) Approval of the June 13, 2022 meeting minutes
Pat Epstein, Chair

Claudia Yanez motioned to approve, Ana Pomar seconded, minutes approved.

4. Discuss and Consider Action

4A. [2022-0685](#)

Budget Discussion

Discussion on budget for training and investment in causes related to the Equity Pillars.

James Matlock, Vice-Chair

Vice-Chair Matlock said he brought it up because when they spoke with council in February, they said you need a budget, how much do you need? We said yes and we have not talked about. There are four things that come to mind.

1) Training. Just because you come from an ethnicity or background doesn't mean you don't have a blind spot in regard to equity. Everybody does. What training does is open your blind spot to that and teaches you how to go about doing this work based on professionals who have had success doing this work. He thinks they will be more effective if they have formal training. He said he does not know if the group has gone through the four stages of team building. With this training it better helps us to create synergy

Chair Epstein asked where they find groups to lead the training.

Vice-Chair Matlock said he would like to do a Request for Proposal (RFP) for training. He said the cost could run from \$99 to \$6000 per person. He suggested \$1500 per person.

Chair Epstein said what they are talking about for the agenda item is to request a budget that would include that (training).

Claudia Yanez says she agrees if they get training but she said she thought part of the budget offer was to be more visible and have more of a presence at community events.

Claudia Yanez said in her mind when she first got involved in the commission, she did her own research and there are other municipal equity commissions out there. The training angle she saw was what could they learn from these other commissions. They have already gone down that path.

Vice-Chair Matlock said when he started on the commission, he spoke with Hutto quite a bit but there was a plethora of infighting because they didn't go through the team building process.

2) Economic support for partners: At the Juneteenth celebration the commission was not present. He said they had talked about it and he initially was not interested in this being a cultural group but more of a champion for equity from a more tangible standpoint. However, attending that program he recognized that this is an arm of what they are doing also. If they are not providing funding, how are they assisting?

Chair Epstein said the city did invest certain resources in Juneteenth. There were two big festivals in one weekend and it would have been nice to have

calendarized them. She asked if the budget would be for the city to be supportive or the Equity Commission.

Vice-Chair said it would be the city giving funds to Equity Commission to fund a small part of the celebration.

Secretary To asked if he was advocating giving out a grant.

Vice-Chair Matlock said some monetary support.

Chair Epstein said there are other cultural groups that could be brought into and educate the population that there are ways to participate in their city, and their city is willing to help them engage.

Secretary To said it might be worth a look advocating for council to provide grants for these groups to put on these events. For example: \$500 to Black Pflugerville or Pride, in addition to however the city is already supporting them.

Vice-Chair Matlock wanted to make sure the check is being presented by Chair Epstein or whomever is in the position. It has to come from the Commission or you won't get the name recognition or response.

3) Mailouts and swag: People think that this is not important, but how many times has someone noticed it. He spoke about Mr. Rogers Pflugerville mask. Name recognition. Giveaways so people know who they are.

4) Vice-Chair Matlock said at one point the Commission Identified all of the partners on the charter, but what does it mean to be a partner? He stated that in his mind he said, they are working together on issues. They need to identify these issues up front. He suggested the have a retreat to focus on this.

Chair Epstein says she agrees with training, this is a brainstorming meeting. At the work session, come back with ideas on how they would envision the trainings. How they would envision the trainings.

Economic support for partners: Chair Epstein says it would be City of Pflugerville Equity Commission.

In regard to mailouts and swag, and a retreat, she agrees on everything but not as sure about swag. Build into the budget things that fit into the city identity. She said she is not sure about asking the city for t-shirts but there are other things they could do, smaller things. She could see if they have a booth at Expo. It would go to pay for the cost of the booth.

Claudia Yanez suggested polo shirts.

Ana Pomar said she looks for all the flaws. She loves the idea not for team building, but considering specific ways they can maintain the Equity Commission. Her concern is to keep the work, they need to have training for the next group.

Vice-Chair Matlock said the budget has not been passed for next fiscal year.

Council member McDonald said the budget will pass the budget in August or

September but asking for a budget is a good way to set precedent.

Ana Pomar said Council member McDonald brought up a good point about setting a precedent.

Ana asked if they should be concerned about setting a precedent with the amount.

Council member McDonald said no.

Ana Pomar said what she would like is a campaign to get the whole city behind the Equity Commission.

Chair Epstein said that would take thousands of dollars.

Ana Pomar said they have to start somewhere.

Chair Epstein said she is wrapping it up and asked Vice-Chair Matlock to get with Jennifer Griswold to hammer the budget out.

Claudia Yanez said she could check with other cities and how they got trainings, and if they did trainings at all.

Daisy Castillo said it is more feasible now because last year they were still in a pandemic.

Chair Epstein said you have to commit to staying around because they are learning to talk to each other.

4B. [2022-0686](#)

Retreat

Discussion on planning retreat for FY 23

James Matlock, Vice-Chair

Chair Epstein suggested to wait on a retreat until fall.

Vice-Chair Matlock said they are more than halfway through the year. Time goes fast and they trying to quantify it. They are trying to do a whole lot with a little bit of time and are not getting anything done. He suggested a meeting on August 1st and maybe one in early September for those who can attend. They are not official meetings.

4C. [2022-0687](#)

Voting Equity

Discussion of voting in relation to equity issues

Pat Epstein, Chair

Chair Epstein introduced this item first in order to give Vice-Chair Matlock a chance to join the meeting. She talked about Equity in regard to voting, access to voting, and the right to vote. She said she wanted to talk with the Commission to see if this is something they want to take to council. She mentioned that Secretary To had spoken about resolutions. She opened the floor to discussion.

Secretary To said she mentioned supporting the idea of elections be moved to

November so that it is uniform. Chair Epstein said she is a personal advocate but did not want to put that on the Commission, more people vote in November, some of the problems she has heard that are a potential problem is that local are down at the bottom and it is unclear if voters would go through the entire ballot.

Secretary To said you get more people voting in November also.

Chair Epstein said the school elections typically only have around 3,000 voters. The City Council in May used to get around 5,000.

Secretary To said not everyone will vote down the ballot but it's better because it encourages more participation

Vice-Chair Matlock joined the meeting at 6:36 p.m. Chair Epstein explained they had skipped to item 5C.

Ana Pomar said we know traditionally teachers and the elderly show up to vote. We need to make a better effort to go to where the elderly live, and provide VDRs with guidance on how to fill out ballots, in order to assist them with driving them to vote.

Chair Epstein said it would require a lot of training, and there is a lot of legal things that come into play.

Ana Pomar said she understood but it is an important equity issue.

Chair Epstein said Ana Pomar makes a good point since there are a lot of elderly who cannot get to the polls, and there is also a mail in ballot that is harder to do now

Ana Pomar said with the new senior complexes we should have VDRs ready to register people to vote.

Chair Epstein asked who we are, the equity commission? They could have people from all political spectrums.

Ana Pomar said yes. This is an a-political issue.

Chair Epstein said we could have that as a priority.

Daisy Castillo said in regard to changing the election date, she found it was easier to concentrate on individual issues if there is not a lot on the ballot. Recently, she was able to just do school board. She said when there are these smaller ballots, she has opportunity to do more research into them.

Vice-Chair Matlock said the Commission had a discussion about voting before, he stated that the democratic party or republican party come out and say who they support, could we not say from an equity standpoint that these are the candidates we support?

Chair Epstein said she didn't know if they could.

Ana Pomar said she thought they could not.

Vice-Chair Matlock said 90% of the people go into voting without knowing about the issue so they vote for people whose name sounds they might support their issues, not knowing if that name references a particular nationality, ethnicity or gender. There are all kinds of decision being made that people don't know who they are voting for.

Ana Pomar said that is one type of voting personality. She suggested contacting the League of Women Voters and ask them to create a new category of equity.

Vice-Chair Matlock asked if the League of Women Voters are looking at it from a complete equity swap.

Ana Pomar said they are very apolitical

Secretary To said Ana Pomar had a good idea. His concern is anything they do would be seen as an endorsement. There are groups already doing this work and we could pass suggestions to them.

Chair Epstein said it could become a category on their questionnaire we could work with them on how to address that they put out information on candidates, not endorsements.

Vice-Chair Matlock asked what if the commission 2 months prior to any election, bring in the officials and create a form for information. He stated what he is more concerned about are these referendums, bring someone in to explain the referendums. They are not straightforward and are hard to understand.

Secretary To said perhaps we could advocate the city produce literature that explain things in layman's terms on the ballot.

Vice-Chair Matlock said he is concerned voters may think it has a slant if it comes from the city. If it comes from the commission, it does have a slant, equity.

Ana Pomar said she likes the way he is thinking, it appeals to her idealism, but it takes a lot of steps to reach that ideal. She likes the idea, but it is not a one and done check-off process, there is a lot to consider because we have to be careful and diligent and if we fail, the public says "hey Equity Commission, what happened?"

Vice-Chair Matlock said you guys were against the first idea, so the second idea is creating an informational form and bring the people who are writing it to explain it.

Chair Epstein said at least someone who has knowledge to explain it. She agrees and there are some things when reading ballots that are not clear.

Ana Pomar said the EMS situation is a perfect example.

Secretary To pointed out the Texas Constitution itself is confusing.

Vice-Chair Matlock said that is his point.

Daisy Castillo asked if that was better in a Commission meeting form or in an open community event at the library.

Vice-Chair Matlock said it could be either, but if they do it in the Commission meeting forum and announce a few weeks in advance they are having the forum and who is coming to the forum and what issues they are discussing, they will have a full house. Or, they can do the same and have it at the library.

Jennifer Griswold reminded the Commission that they will need advanced notice for a library event due to the popularity of room use.

Ana Pomar said if they really focus on equity, mass communication is best.

Secretary To said that is fine, but the more important thing is getting the information out in a newsletter or a pamphlet they can use. He gave an example from a relative in California who received a booklet with plenty of information and links to further reading.

Chair Epstein said that may be a good document especially on referendums, etc., but maybe not on candidates because people come with such strong opinions, but something that is educating through the lens of equity could be good thing to produce for people and may be a good project for the Commission.

Chair Epstein said one of the things this agenda item is about as well is just the November thing which she still thinks personally all elections should be in November. She thinks its more of an access issue, they get more time off work to vote, access, etc., She said when she is talking about voting in equity lens she is talking about access to the vote. Chair Epstein said she was not saying they make a decision that evening.

Claudia Yanez said her concern is how to scope it. Do we start with city elections? What is the scope?

Chair Epstein said they are already in November. They are already getting a large vote. The only one left is the school board election.

Claudia Yanez asked if we go with the information forum suggestion, which candidates will that be limited to? Which elections?

Vice-Chair Matlock said it is just the election at hand, if it gets beyond local or state level, have state and national level.

Chair Epstein so the non-partisan.

Vice-Chair Matlock, yes. Mr. McDonald has more influence over my life than Mr. Biden and a lot of people don't realize that.

Claudia Yanez said that is why we scope it accordingly to start because we can always expand it.

Chair Epstein said maybe county.

Claudia Yanez said it could be impactful and a scope we can start with and see success.

Vice-Chair Matlock said you are right; this is one of the meetings we talked, a working meeting to get together to create this framework.

Chair Epstein said we can plan to have a work session on this.

Ana Pomar said yes, she is a data driven and loves to have data in front of her. Couldn't we bring data and statistics to guide those decision? For example, to answer Daisy Castillo's concerns. The longer the items you have to vote on and the longer the lines, the more likely someone is to go home.

Daisy Castillo says it also depends where the elections are, you have a small election and you have the entire gym at Pace High School, but there are larger elections where they go to a very small building or office.

Chair Epstein said you are raising a good point. As the Equity Commission of Pflugerville, you can go to county officials who select voting locations, with the growth we need more voting locations.

Ana Pomar said the pandemic really effected the number of volunteers they had and they were really low on people to volunteer to work the elections.

Ana Pomar said it was mainly seniors who volunteer.

Chair Epstein said let's try and frame this there are two things 1) voting equity issues should be expansive and accessible 2) action, what action do we take for example expanding locations, review of the items, how many languages do we get it translated into and distributed

Ana Pomar said 2023 is a legislative year and we can get our state representatives to come, we need to find a sponsor who would be interested in simplifying the language in the referendums. Another step would be to get two representatives who were willing to help.

Ana Pomar said it is our duty.

Chair Epstein said it is but our elected official's duty to make it accessible.

Ana Pomar said nonvoters elect candidates by not showing up.

Chair Epstein the most we can do is create an atmosphere where non voters are more likely to participate.

Vice-Chair Matlock wanted to make sure he was clear on action items.

Chair Epstein suggested a work session to hammer out the details

Vice-Chair Matlock said the election is in November we have 3 meetings

Vice-Chair Matlock stated this needed to happen soon given the timeline.

Ana Pomar said she would do the research.

Chair Epstein said numbers from elections, general election, school board, etc.

Ana Pomar asked Claudia Yanez to assist.

Chair Epstein said the whole year and a half has been a learning curve.

Vice-Chair Matlock asked if they talked about the Juneteenth celebration.

Chair Epstein said Alicia Jackson, President of Black Pflugerville, was here and talked about the celebration.

Vice-Chair Matlock said the follow-up is it was a great event. At the height there may have been about 200 people there. He was wondering about partnering with them for a postmortem.

Chair Epstein said she was coming in August.

Vice-Chair Matlock wanted to thank the chief for donating officers for the event.

5. Adjourn

Adjourn 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Coffey Griswold
Library Director

Approved as _____ on August 8 , 2022.